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10/762,758	01/21/2004	Stephen Cozzolino	0148-1	5583
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ERNEST D. BUFF			EXAMINER	
ERNEST D. BUFF AND ASSOCIATES, LLC.			ABDELSALAM, FATHI K	
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		ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/762,758

Applicant(s)

COZZOLINO, STEPHEN

Examiner

Fathi Abdelsalam

Art Unit

4176

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 21 January 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SE-US)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 20040623
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: ____

DETAILED ACTION

1. This action is a non-final, first office action on the merits in response to applicant's communication filed on 01/21/2004, wherein claims 1-15 are currently pending.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted on 06/23/2004 is being considered by the examiner.

Specification

3. Applicant is reminded of the proper language and format for an abstract of the disclosure.

The abstract should be in narrative form and generally limited to a single paragraph on a separate sheet within the range of 50 to 150 words. It is important that the abstract not exceed 150 words in length since the space provided for the abstract on the computer tape used by the printer is limited. The form and legal phraseology often used in patent claims, such as "means" and "said," should be avoided. The abstract should describe the disclosure sufficiently to assist readers in deciding whether there is a need for consulting the full patent text for details.

The language should be clear and concise and should not repeat information given in the title. It should avoid using phrases which can be implied, such as, "The disclosure concerns," "The disclosure defined by this invention," "The disclosure describes," etc.

4. The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it exceeds the maximum allowable length. Correction is required. See MPEP § 608.01(b).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in:

(1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or

(2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Fredell et al. (PGPUB 2001/0028364) (Hereinafter referred to as Fredell).

6. Regarding **Claim 1**:

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system for monitoring and recording single tasks forming part of a project performable by two employees that function as a task Originator and a task Recipient in a matrix based organization ([0002], "a method and system for communicating to such users tasks that

need to be executed in connection with a project, and to a method and system for tracking and managing execution of such tasks”), comprising:

a. task state machine system software means for enforcing the rules of the task state machine, incorporating schema required by the task state machine diagram; and persisting all task state changes to a relational database ([Abstract], “allows for posting over the global communications network to selected project participants the plurality of project tasks. The posted plurality of project tasks is linkable to the database”); (See also at least [0011 and 0086] - pertaining to database storage and [0041] – pertaining to software)

b. task state machine graphic interface means associated with said system software for providing ability to transact tasks, and for providing visibility of task related details to employees based on organizational hierarchy ([0010], “further provides an interface screen available through a global communications network. The interface screen is configurable to identify a plurality of project tasks. The interface screen includes a datafield”) and ([0041], “FIG. 2 shows further exemplary features in connection with the server software which may be readily incorporated in web server 20. For example, a distribution module 50 allows web server 20 to electronically distribute the project”).

7. Regarding **Claim 2**:

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system as recited by claim 1, wherein said system software means is resident on a single server computer ([0041], "FIG. 2 shows further exemplary features in connection with the server software which may be readily incorporated in web server 20. For example, a distribution module 50 allows web server 20 to electronically distribute the project"). (See also Figure 1 – pertaining to Network service provider administrator 22 and Web Server).

8. Regarding **Claim 3**:

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system as recited by claim 1, wherein said system software means is distributed over a secure network, such as an Intranet or an Internet ([0041], "FIG. 2 shows further exemplary features in connection with the server software which may be readily incorporated in web server 20. For example, a distribution module 50 allows web server 20 to electronically distribute the project"). (See also Figure 1).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

9. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

10. Claims 4-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fredell et al. (PGPUB 2001/0028364) (Hereinafter referred to as Fredell), in view of Corral (US 7,337,124). The references disclosing the functionality of Fredell have been set forth above.

11. Regarding **Claims 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14:**

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system, as applied above in the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), wherein said task state machine graphic interface means incorporates said task state diagram (See at least Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7) and is based on any of the Task Roles:

Originator, (Fredell [0018], "Project Manager");

Recipient, (Fredell [0017], "Project Participant");

None--(Visual Rights only), (Fredell [0042], "user authorization module 56 which allows only authorized personnel to access individual memoranda and related documents and communications through an interface module 76.") and (Fredell [0086],

"For example, in addition to the authorized project managers, participant access to first database section 30 could be selectively controlled or categorized into distinct types, e.g., Editor and Reader.");

and the Task State of Generate (See Figure 5—pertaining to creating task assignment.)

Fredell does not explicitly disclose that the system incorporates Request, Accept, Submit, Close, Decline and Cancel specific task states.

However, Corral teaches an enterprise wide task and commitment management system, wherein said task state machine graphic interface means incorporates any of the task States (Request, Accept, Submit, Close, Decline and Cancel) relating to the corresponding user roles as described in the following paragraphs:

wherein the Task Role is Originator and said Task State is Request (Corral [Col.

4, lines 61-62], "in addition to reports generated by request");

requesting a defined task from a Recipient (Fredell [0007], "the acquiring entity may request additional information or clarification from the target").

wherein the Task Role is Recipient and said Task State is Request, said defined

task being evaluated by the Recipient to determine if the task should be accepted, declined or modified. (Corral [Col. 17, lines 20-23], "FIG. 2, column 208 shows a Documentation Review and Acceptance (R&A) process to be immediately described with reference to FIGS. 6-a and 6-

b.") and (Corral [Col. 4, lines 61-62], "in addition to reports generated by request") and, (Corral [Col. 7, lines 24-31], "To manage each request for change to ensure that the scope of the Project is kept under control; To ensure each request for change is assessed by key project players; To allow each change to be accepted (or rejected or deferred) by the appropriate authority; To enable the orderly implementation of each accepted change").

wherein the Task Role is Recipient or Originator and said Task State is Request or Accept, said defined task being modified by invoking New Change Request (Corral [Col. 4, lines 61-62], "in addition to reports generated by request") and, (Corral [Col. 7, lines 24-31], "To manage each request for change to ensure that the scope of the Project is kept under control; To ensure each request for change is assessed by key project players; To allow each change to be accepted (or rejected or deferred) by the appropriate authority; To enable the orderly implementation of each accepted change").

wherein the Task Role is None -- (Visibility rights only) and Task State is Request (Corral [Col. 4, lines 61-62], "in addition to reports generated by request"); said defined task being viewable by any one in the enterprise who has implicit visibility rights because they are in the upward, inline management of the Originator or the Recipient of the task (Fredell [0042],

"user authorization module 56 which allows only authorized personnel to access individual memoranda and related documents and communications through an interface module 76.") and (Fredell [0086], "For example, in addition to the authorized project managers, participant access to first database section 30 could be selectively controlled or categorized into distinct types, e.g., Editor and Reader.");

wherein the Task Role is Recipient and Task State is Accept (Corral [Claim 1], "a documentation process for reviewing and accepting documents generated by the product development projects");

said defined task being accepted by the Recipient through one-on-one negotiation. (Fredell [0007], "Negotiations may then occur between the acquiring entity and the target generating more documentation prior to closing") and (Figure 6).

wherein the Task Role is None -- (Visibility rights only) and Task State is Accept (Corral [Claim 1], "a documentation process for reviewing and accepting documents generated by the product development projects");

said accepted task being viewable by any one in the enterprise who has implicit visibility rights because they are in the upward, inline management of the Originator or the Recipient of the task. (Fredell [0042], "user authorization module 56 which allows only authorized personnel to access individual memoranda and related documents and

communications through an interface module 76.") and (Fredell [0086], "For example, in addition to the authorized project managers, participant access to first database section 30 could be selectively controlled or categorized into distinct types, e.g., Editor and Reader.");

wherein the Task Role is Recipient and Task State is Submit (Corral [Col. 15, Table 15], "Fill in & submit");

said task being submitted by the Recipient in the form of an RTF file or other file type based on filters loaded in the said system software. (Fredell [0002], "method and system for distributing electronic documents") and (Corral [Claim 10], "wherein the document is a technical document associated with a software product");

wherein the Task Role is None -- (Visibility rights only) and said Task State is Submit (Corral [Col. 15, Table 15], "Fill in & submit");

said submitted task being viewable by any one in the enterprise who has implicit visibility rights because they are in the upward, inline management of the Originator or the Recipient of the task. Fredell [0042], "user authorization module 56 which allows only authorized personnel to access individual memoranda and related documents and communications through an interface module 76.") and (Fredell [0086], "For example, in addition to the authorized project managers, participant

access to first database section 30 could be selectively controlled or categorized into distinct types, e.g., Editor and Reader.”); wherein the Task Role is Originator and said Task State is Submit (Corral [Col. 15, Table 15], “Fill in & submit”); said submitted task being reviewed by the Originator to accept and close the task or reject and submit for rework by the Recipient. (Corral [Col. 17, lines 20-23], “FIG. 2, column 208 shows a Documentation Review and Acceptance (R&A) process to be immediately described with reference to FIGS. 6-a and 6-b.”)

“As for all the previously described processes, the QMA tasks are accessible through a GUI interface.” (Corral [Col. 44, lines 34-35])

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time of the invention, to have modified the system and method of Fredell so as to have included said task states and corresponding said task roles as taught by Corral, in order to better assist in “defining the documentation workflows; and ensuring that the teams conform to the workflow” (Corral), since so doing could be performed readily and easily by any person of ordinary skill in the art, with neither undue experimentation, nor risk of unexpected results. Additionally, both the Patent and Patent Application referred to herein relate to the same field of endeavor (management of tasks and business processes) and are directed to the same problem sought to be solved (optimizing task and work flow).

12. Regarding **Claim 5**:

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system as recited by claim 4 wherein the Task Role is Originator and said Task State is Generate, defining a task. (See Figure 5—pertaining to creating task assignment.)

13. Regarding **Claim 15**:

Fredell discloses an enterprise wide task and commitment management system as recited by claim 4, wherein inline managers using Task Role None -- (Visibility Rights only) monitor the task generation, task execution and task submission and task commitment for:

a. generating employee performance appraisals and substantiating the appraisal with selective task content from the database (Fredell [0086], "a database management tool 28 using software techniques well known to those skilled in the art, allows for electronically coupling web server 20 to database 26 made up of a first database section 30 where the project-related data may be conveniently stored.") and (Fredell [Claim 12], "analysis performed on the historical project issue data");

b. mining the database for recurring tasks and multiple, linked recurring tasks to discover inefficiencies and consequently redesign a business process to gain efficiencies (Fredell [0091], "system may facilitate adjusting the plurality of tasks for new similar projects in view of expert analysis performed on the historical project issue data

since one could learn from issues having developed during past performance of similar projects"); and

c. providing first hand content of who did what and when to prove compliance of state or federal regulations (Fredell [Claim 17], "said interface screen including a datafield for defining a respective time window over which each of said tasks is to be performed by at least one project participant... automatically generating a warning message to the project participant responsible for performing a given task when the results of the relating step exceed predefined task-completion thresholds relative to the respective time window."

Conclusion

14. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

15. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Fathi Abdelsalam whose telephone number is (571) 270-3517. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday 8:00-5:00pm ET.

16. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jerry O'Connor can be reached on (571) 272-6787. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300.

17. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or (571) 272-1000.

/F. A./
Examiner, Art Unit 4176

/Gerald J. O'Connor/
Supervisory Patent Examiner
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